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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7268

INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

USDOC WASHDC

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 HARARE 005608

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

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NNEMAN, AA/AFR - VNEWTON, AND A/AID - RMCCALL

PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/03/2010

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: UN/UNDP MISSION MEMBERS SEEK EMBASSY VIEWS  
ON RESUMING LAND REFORM DIALOGUE WITH THE GOZ

REF: (A) HARARE 5514, (B) STATE 186563

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR TOM MCDONALD FOR REASONS 1.5  
(B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: DURING AN HOUR'S MEETING OCTOBER 2 THREE MEMBERS OF THE UN/UNDP MISSION SEARCHED FOR AN OPENING IN OUR POSITION ON THE CURRENT LAND REFORM IMPASSE TO REKINDLE DONOR DIALOGUE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE. THROUGHOUT THE DISCUSSION THE AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY OFFICERS STRESSED THAT THE USG WANTS TO BE HELPFUL BUT RULE OF LAW AND MACROECONOMIC STABILITY MUST BE ESTABLISHED IN ZIMBABWE. THE UN/UNDP TEAM SKETCHED OUT THE LINES OF A POSSIBLE PACKAGE THAT AT ONCE WOULD BE FACE SAVING FOR MUGABE, RETAINING THE FAST TRACK APPROACH TO LAND REFORM, AND SATISFY DONOR QUALMS ABOUT INVESTING HERE. ESSENTIALLY THE DONORS WOULD OFFER TO PAY FOR 211 UNCONTENTED FARMS CURRENTLY ON OFFER AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD END THE LAWLESSNESS ON THE FARMS AND EMBARK ON A DIALOGUE ON LARGER POLITICAL ISSUES. WITHOUT KNOWING ALL THE DETAILS, WE WERE POSITIVE BUT REGISTERED OUR CONCERN THAT THE PLAN BE RATIONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

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ACHIEVABLE. THE TEAM APPEARS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN REACHING A RESOLUTION TO THE CURRENT IMPASSE AND IT IS FACILITATING THE SORT OF COMMUNICATION AND DIPLOMACY THAT IS CURRENTLY IN SHORT SUPPLY HERE. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) ON OCTOBER 3 UN/UNDP MISSION MEMBERS CHONCHOL, OKOTH AND BARUT MET WITH AMBASSADOR MCDONALD, THE DCM, ACTING USAID DIRECTOR MARTIN AND USAID OFFICER LOKEN FOR AN HOUR TO TAKE SOUNDINGS ON THIS EMBASSY'S VIEW ON RESUMING DIALOGUE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE ON LAND REFORM. BY WAY OF PREFACE, AMBASSADOR MCDONALD WELCOMED THE MISSION MEMBERS AND CONVEYED HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THEIR TASK. HE CONTINUED THAT THE USG VIEWED A TRANSPARENT AND ORDERLY LAND REFORM PROGRAM AS NECESSARY FOR ZIMBABWE AND INDEED A MATTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, HOWEVER, WHAT WAS OCCURRING IN THE COUNTRY NOW DID NOT MEET THAT DEFINITION. HE ARGUED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO RESTORE RULE OF LAW ON THE FARMS AND THE USG REMAINED CONCERNED FOR THE FARM WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES WHO WOULD BE DISPLACED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S FAST TRACK EXERCISE. IF PRESIDENT MUGABE WERE TO MAKE A CLEAR STATEMENT THAT IT WAS TIME TO MOVE

OFF THE LAND, THE AMBASSADOR REASONED, MOST OF THE OCCUPIERS WOULD LEAVE AND THE POLICE COULD MOP UP ANY RECALCITRANT RINGLEADERS.

**13.** (C) AMBASSADOR McDONALD CONTINUED THAT THE USG HAD PLEDGED TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ZIMBABWE'S LAND REFORM PROGRAM THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN LAND TENURE CENTER, BUT THAT RECENT EVENTS HAD SEVERELY CURTAILED SUCH SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES. HE OBSERVED THAT

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THE USG COULD CONTINUE TO HELP WITH MONEY FOR TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM AND EVEN RESETTLEMENT, BUT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN FUNDS TO BUY LAND.  
HANDING OVER A NON-PAPER THAT REFLECTED DONOR PERSPECTIVES ON WHAT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO RESUME DIALOGUE ON LAND REFORM, THE AMBASSADOR ASKED THE MISSION MEMBERS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH US, LEST THEY GET AHEAD OF OUR POSITION ON THIS MATTER.

**14.** (C) CHONCHOL CONCEDED THAT THE MISSION HAD MET ONLY WITH THE INDIGENOUS COMMERCIAL FARMER'S UNION (ICFU) AND THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS' UNION (CFU) AND WOULD MEET WITH THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ON OCTOBER 3. HE OBSERVED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTED TO ACCELERATE ITS LAND REFORM GOAL BUT IT HAD LITTLE MONEY, AND SO IT CHANGED THE CONSTITUTION. "PEOPLE SAY," CHONCHOL CONTINUED, THAT THERE'S NEED FOR DIALOGUE AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD CONDUCT LAND REFORM IF IT HAD FUNDS. THE DONORS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL NOT GIVE MONEY UNLESS THERE IS RESPECT FOR THE LAW. "WHAT IS FOR YOU THE RULE OF LAW?"  
AMBASSADOR McDONALD REPLIED THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT INTERESTED IN GETTING INTO A DEBATE ON SEMANTICS. THE FARM OCCUPATIONS AND THE ATTENDANT VIOLENCE HAD BEEN A ZANU-PF CAMPAIGN TACTIC, BUT NOW THE ELECTION WAS OVER. THE ZIMBABWE REPUBLIC POLICE, WHICH IS QUITE GOOD,

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SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DO ITS JOB, THE AMBASSADOR SAID.  
HE ALSO SAID THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH SHOULD ENFORCE COURT ORDERS AGAINST TRESPASSERS, AS WELL AS FIND AND PROSECUTE INDIVIDUALS WHO PERPETRATED SERIOUS CRIMES FROM DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY TO MURDER IN THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD.

**15.** (C) CHONCHOL THEN ASKED WHERE SHOULD THE PEOPLE ALREADY ON THE FARMS BE PUT, SINCE TO REMOVE THEM SUMMARILY WOULD PRESENT THE GOVERNMENT A POLITICAL

PROBLEM. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS' UNION HAD OFFERED FARMS VOLUNTARILY. CHONCHOL ACKNOWLEDGED THAT 211 FARMS HAD BEEN OFFERED, BUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT REACTED TO THE OFFER. THE AMBASSADOR SPECULATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ACCEPT THE FARMS BUT WOULD WANT MORE. USAID OFFICER LOKEN EXPLAINED THAT THE ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT HAD EXPENDED ITS ENTIRE BUDGET AND NOW HAD NO MONEY TO PAY FOR FARMS. UNTIL IT DID, IT WOULD NOT ENGAGE THE FARMERS. POLITICS PLAYED A PART AS WELL: WHEN THE FARMERS INITIALLY INSTITUTED A SUIT AGAINST THE PRESIDENT THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDED WITH SILENCE; WHEN THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS' CONFIDENTIAL

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UNION DROPPED THE SUIT, COMMUNICATION RESUMED. WITH THE SUIT NOW REINSTATED, ATTITUDES WERE HARDENING AGAIN, LOKEN OBSERVED.

16. (C) "COULD DONORS HELP WITH MONEY?" CHONCHOL INQUIRED. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT THE DONORS WERE PREPARED TO EXPLORE SEVERAL OPTIONS, PROVIDED THE RULE OF LAW WAS RESPECTED. OKOTH OBSERVED THAT THE RULE OF LAW ARGUMENT APPEARED TO EMBRACE GOVERNANCE IN GENERAL IN THE ZIMBABWEAN CONTEXT. "WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO CORDON IT OFF ONLY TO APPLY TO LAND?" THE AMBASSADOR ANSWERED THAT, "WE WANT TO FOCUS ON LAND, BUT LIFE DOESN'T HAPPEN IN A VACUUM. WE WANT TO SOLVE THE LAND QUESTION, BUT THERE IS NO CLEAR LINE BETWEEN WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE FARMS AND IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL LIFE." OKOTH REJOINED THAT IN 1998 THE DONORS HAD COMMITTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LAND REFORM PROCESS, WHEREAS NOW THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE COMPLAINED THAT THE DONORS STARTED RAISING EXTRANEous ISSUES. USAID OFFICER LOKEN REPLIED THAT THE RULE OF LAW QUESTION WAS SIMILAR TO THE MACROECONOMIC SITUATION. UNTIL MACROECONOMIC STABILITY WAS ACHIEVED, NO DONOR WOULD BE PREPARED TO INVEST IN ZIMBABWE. OKOTH THEN SAID THAT PERHAPS THE WAY TO PUT IT WAS THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT MADE A COMMITMENT TO SOLVE THE LAWLESSNESS ISSUE THEN WE CAN HAVE A DIALOGUE ON THE BIGGER POLITICAL ISSUE.

17. (C) BARUT RETURNED TO THE ISSUE OF WHETHER THERE WAS ROOM FOR DIALOGUE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S FAST TRACK PROGRAM, AND WHETHER ANY TINKERING COULD BE DONE TO MAKE IT ACCEPTABLE TO THE DONORS. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT WE NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT THE PROGRAM ENTAILED. HAVING TALKED ABOUT IT TO SIX MINISTERS, "I STILL DON'T KNOW THAT THEY HAVE A PROGRAM," THE AMBASSADOR OBSERVED. BARUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE MISSION WAS ATTEMPTING TO FIND OUT AS WELL. HE THEN ASKED WHETHER THE DONOR COMMUNITY DISPUTED THE 5 MILLION HECTARE GOAL THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE INTENDED TO ACQUIRE. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT MUCH DEPENDED ON THE WILL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED SERIOUSLY AND IN A RATIONAL WAY. THE AMBASSADOR CONTINUED THAT THE LAND ACQUISITION SHOULD PROCEED IN STAGES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH CAPACITY AND RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS, YET WITHIN A LONGER-TERM FRAMEWORK TO ACHIEVE THE GOVERNMENT'S GREATER 5M HA OBJECTIVE. OKOTH THEN ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD MAKE SENSE TO GO BACK TO THE INCEPTION PHASE, PUT THE PEOPLE ON THE LAND SOMEWHERE ELSE AND PLACE THE FAST TRACK PROGRAM WITHIN THE INCEPTION PHASE? ACTING USAID DIRECTOR MARTIN SAID THAT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE AS, IN ESSENCE, THAT WOULD MEAN RETURNING TO THE PROGRAM APPROVED BY ALL PARTIES AT THE 1998 DONORS' LAND CONFERENCE. USAID OFFICER LOKEN SUPPLEMENTED THE ANSWER BY OBSERVING THAT WHAT WAS GOING ON AT THE MOMENT WAS UNACCEPTABLE, UNPLANNED, UNDEMOCRATIC AND NOT TRANSPARENT. "HOW DO WE KNOW THAT RIGHT PEOPLE ARE BEING PLACED ON THE FARMS," HE ASKED. MANY SERIOUS ISSUES, SUCH AS PLACING

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QUALIFIED WORKERS ON FARMS, HAD TO BE DEALT WITH BEFORE  
THE DONORS WOULD BE WILLING TO SUPPORT IT.

¶18. (C) OKOTH AGREED THAT IT HAD TO BE A RATIONAL AND  
ACHIEVABLE PROGRAM. BARUT SUGGESTED ONE APPROACH MIGHT  
BE TO START WITH THE 211 FARMS, UNDERSTANDING THAT THE  
GOVERNMENT NEEDED MONEY BOTH TO PURCHASE THESE FROM THE  
COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION, MOVE THE PEOPLE ON THE FARMS  
TO THEM, AND TRAIN THE LAND RECIPIENTS IN MODERN FARMING  
METHODS. IF A TRANSPARENT TRUST FUND IS SET UP AND THE  
GOVERNMENT IS ALLOWED TO SAVE FACE, WOULD THE DONORS BE  
SATISFIED? ACTING USAID DIRECTOR MARTIN REPLIED THAT  
THE TARGET OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT LAND REFORM  
PROGRAM WAS THE WAR VETERANS, MANY OF WHOM ARE THUGS  
PAID TO CAUSE MAYHEM AND NOT QUALIFIED TO FARM. THEY  
SHOULD NOT BE MOVED TO THE 211 FARMS. AMBASSADOR  
MCDONALD CONCURRED, NOTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD  
CREATED A PROBLEM FOR ITSELF AND THE DONORS COULD NOT BE  
SEEN TO BE REWARDING LAWLESSNESS.

¶19. (C) SUMMING UP WHAT HE HAD HEARD FROM US AND HIS  
ZIMBABWEAN INTERLOCUTORS TO DATE, BARUT SAID THAT "WE  
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NEED A PACKAGE" TO OFFER THE GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD  
INCLUDE A CLEAR COMMITMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO  
RESTORING THE RULE OF LAW ON THE FARMS. FROM THAT BASE  
DONORS AND GOVERNMENT COULD BUILD. THE AMBASSADOR  
POINTED TO DIFFERENT LOCAL INITIATIVES THAT WERE UNDER  
WAY AROUND THE COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY IN THE MIDLANDS  
PROVINCE, TO BRIDGE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FARMER, WAR  
VETERAN AND GOVERNMENT AND SUGGESTED THAT SOME OF THESE  
WOULD BEAR CLOSE STUDY. CHONCHOL RECALLED A FORMULA  
THAT WOULD APPORTION 20 PERCENT OF THE FARMS TO THE WAR  
VETERANS, WHICH THE DONORS HAD ACCEPTED EARLIER. LOKEN  
RESPONDED IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CUT SUCH A DEAL NOW,  
GIVEN PAST ACTIONS AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY ASSURANCE THAT  
ANY OF THESE PEOPLE HAD ANY QUALIFICATIONS WHATSOEVER  
BEYOND THEIR LOYALTY TO ZANU-PF AND MUGABE. ACTING  
USAID DIRECTOR MARTIN SUGGESTED THAT A WIN-WIN FORMULA  
WOULD BE A RETURN TO THE 1998 AGREEMENT WHICH ALL  
PARTIES ACCEPTED. THE DONOR CAPITALS WERE LOOKING FOR A  
RATIONAL PLAN, SOMETHING THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE HAD  
BEEN UNABLE TO PRESENT, DESPITE NUMEROUS, FAILED HIGH  
LEVEL MISSIONS.

¶10. (C) OKOTH OBSERVED THAT IN TALKING TO THE CFU HE  
WAS STRUCK BY HOW CONFIDENT IT SEEMED ABOUT TAKING ON  
THE GOVERNMENT. IT WAS ALMOST AS IF THE FARMERS HAD A  
GODFATHER BEHIND THEM. AMBASSADOR MCDONALD REPLIED THAT  
IF SO, IT WAS NOT THE UNITED STATES. THE BRITISH ARE  
PREPARED TO PAY FOR LAND WHEN IT IS APPROPRIATE, BUT THE  
USG WAS NOT PREPARED TO DO SO AT THIS TIME. CHONCHOL  
OBSERVED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD RESPOND TO CFU  
INTRASIGENCE IN KIND AND THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE WAS A  
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HARD-LINER WHO WOULD NOT CHANGE HIS POSITION UNLESS HE  
SAW THAT IT WAS IN HIS INTEREST TO DO SO. LOKEN THOUGHT  
THAT ONE POSSIBLE WAY OUT MIGHT BE THROUGH THE ECONOMIC  
MODELING THAT THE WORLD BANK WAS DOING, LOOKING AT THE  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT THAT VARIOUS COMBINATIONS AND  
PERMUTATIONS OF LAND USE MIGHT HAVE TO REACH A CONSENSUS  
WAY FORWARD. MARTIN TOLD HIS INTERLOCUTORS NOT TO LEAVE  
THE MEETING WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE WAS NO DONOR  
WILLINGNESS TO HELP. ON THE CONTRARY, A GREAT RESERVE  
OF GOOD WILL EXISTED, BUT WE CAN NO LONGER TAKE

GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES ON FAITH.

¶11. (C) COMMENT: THE TEAM MEMBERS HAVE DONE THEIR HOMEWORK AND ARE EXCELLENT IN THE ART OF INDIRECT INTERROGATION. CONTRARY TO OUR PRIOR IMPRESSION, THEY APPEAR TO HAVE A GENUINE INTEREST IN FINDING SOME RESOLUTION TO THE CURRENT IMPASSE. IN OUR DISCUSSION THE ELEMENTS OF THE TEAM'S PROPOSALS BEGAN TO COME TO LIGHT. THE MEMBERS WANT TO PROPOSE A FACE-SAVING PACKAGE FOR THE ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT THAT PRESERVES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE FAST TRACK LAND APPROACH. THEY APPEAR TO BE LOOKING FOR SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS OF READY CASH FROM THE DONOR COMMUNITY TO PURCHASE THE 211 UNCONTESTED FARMS ON OFFER. TURNING THE LAND OVER TO THE GOVERNMENT, THEY APPEAR TO REASON, WOULD PROVIDE THE

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SUFFICIENT INCENTIVE TO RETURN TO THE 1998 PRINCIPLES.  
THEY HAVE A HARD SELL ON ALL SIDES AND AT THIS WRITING  
IT IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR THAT THEY WILL SUCCEED.  
NEVERTHELESS, THE UN/UNDP ARE PROBABLY THE RIGHT  
MESSENGERS TO CONDUCT THIS MEDIATION EXERCISE. THEY ARE  
SUPPLYING THE KIND OF COMMUNICATION AND DIPLOMACY WHICH  
CURRENTLY IS IN EXCEEDINGLY SHORT SUPPLY IN ZIMBABWE.  
MISSION IS LOOKING FORWARD TO THEIR FINAL REPORT (DE-  
BRIEFING SET FOR OCTOBER 12). END COMMENT.

MCDONALD

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